



Natural Resources Conservation Service
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

January 12, 2006

GENERAL MANUAL
340 – SPA
AMENDMENT CO-01 – (Part 404)

SUBJECT: SPA - OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATIONS

Purpose. To amend the procedures for the quality assurance process in Colorado.

Effective Date. This Amendment is effective upon receipt.

Explanation. This Amendment adds to the General Manual 3410-SPA, Part 404 that provides State policy for the procedures that will be used in conducting the quality assurance process.

Filing Instructions. Insert the follow.

- Insert the State General Manual Contents, Part CO404 - Evaluations, on page CO404i(1).
- Insert the State General Manual Amendment CO404-10 on pages CO404-10(1) through CO404-10(4).

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Allen Green", is written over a faint, circular official stamp.

ALLEN GREEN
State Conservationist

Attachments

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SUBPART B - OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION

CO404.13(b)(2)

§CO404.13. State Quality Reviews - Quality Assurance.

(a) Purpose.

(1) The quality assurance process will encourage the involvement of employees at all levels of the organizational structure in Colorado. The primary purpose is to support successful implementation of NRCS programs across the State according to prescribed policy and procedure

(2) The quality assurance process should be conducted in a manner that promotes an atmosphere of helpfulness and cooperation.

(3) The quality assurance process should provide all participants with the opportunity to share knowledge and information with each other.

(4) The process in Colorado contains two main components. The first is a Field office (First Level) quality assurance component and second is a State (Second Level) quality assurance component. In general, the First Level component will incorporate annual quality reviews conducted by Field, Area and State specialists. The Second Level component will consist of quality reviews conducted on two Field offices per Area annually. The Area Conservationist (AC), who serves as the Team Leader for the quality review process will select the Field offices. Area and State specialists and program managers will be identified by the Team Leader for inclusion on the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) Team. Team members will be responsible for completing the reviews.

(b) Policy.

(1) District Conservationists (DCs) perform a significant role in the quality assurance process. They are the primary responsible person in identifying necessary functions that should be reviewed to assure that NRCS programs and activities are implemented successfully. Each DC will accomplish the development and implementation of a Quality Assurance Plan within their area of responsibility. These Plans will identify specific functions that are to be reviewed and enlist the assistance of other Field office employees, and Area and State office specialists that are outside the DC's Field office to conduct the necessary reviews.

(2) Quality Assurance Plans (QA Plans) will be developed by **September 15** of each fiscal year. QA Plans will be forwarded to the Area Conservationist for review, concurrence and approval.

CO404-10(1)

SUBPART B - OVERSIGHT AND EVALUATION

CO404.13(b)(4)(i)

(i) QA Plans will identify specific actions to be accomplished that adequately address the overarching Quality Assurance objective and the three major action categories: Program Implementation, Conservation Planning, and Conservation Practice Implementation. A plan template is available and can be obtained by contacting the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations (ASTC-O).

(ii) QA Plans will specify the “Reviewing Official” and provide approximate dates when reviews will be accomplished.

(iii) Quality Assurance Plan action items will be accomplished by the dates specified in the Plan and a copy forwarded to the AC with the “Completed (amounts)” column finalized. The QA Plan will be forwarded by **September 30** of each fiscal year.

(iv) The successful development and implementation of QA Plans will be included in the “Execution of Duties” performance element of the DC’s Performance Work Plan.

(3) Area Conservationists (ACs) are responsible for quality assurance within their Area. Each AC will accomplish the following items.

(i) Field office Quality Assurance Plans will be reviewed and approved by **October 15** of each fiscal year. Documentation that all Field offices have plans in place will be forwarded to the ASTC-O by **October 30** of each fiscal year.

(ii) Provide oversight and support for the completion of all action items in the Field office Plans. Assure that Area and State specialists designated in the Plans are notified and scheduled to accomplish assigned actions items.

(iii) Area Conservationists are the designated team Leader for the State level quality assurance review process.

(iv) As Team Leader, the AC is to receive a report of findings from each member of the QAR Team, compile these findings and forward a report to the ASCT-O by **September 30** for each fiscal year.

(4) The ASTC-O is responsible for overall administrative functions of implementing the quality assurance process in Colorado. The ASTC-O will complete the following activities directly related to Colorado’s quality assurance review process.

(i) Maintain a record of all Field office QA Plans.

CO404-10(2)

Part 404 - Evaluations

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CO404.13(c)(1)(iii)

(ii) Coordinate scheduled State level QARs with program managers and assures scheduling of appropriate State QAR Team specialists by **March 1** of each fiscal year.

(iii) Receive Team Leader report of findings for State level QARs and draft a final report of findings (FROF) for review by the Leadership Team, due **October 30** of each fiscal year.

(iv) Upon review by the State Leadership Team, the ASTC-O will finalize the FROF for concurrence and signature of the State Conservationist (STC).

(5) The Leadership Team will be responsible for identifying appropriate actions that will be taken to correct deficiencies outlined in the FROF.

(i) Actions taken or to be taken in the future by the Leadership Team to address the FROF will be reported to Field office staff.

(ii) Leadership Team members will submit their list of actions to the ASTC-O for consolidation and submittal to Field office staff. This action will be completed by **December 1** of each fiscal year.

(c) Guidance.

(1) State Level Quality Assurance Reviews

(i) QARs will address the overall adherence to NRCS policies, principles, and procedures.

(ii) NRCS work products and tools will be assessed for adequacy in meeting the needs of Field office operations.

(iii) A timeline for the Colorado Quality Assurance process is included in this Amendment under 404.13(d).

CO404-10(3)

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CO404.13(d)

(d) Timeline.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE POSITION	COMPLETED BY
Develop “next fiscal year” Quality Assurance Plans and submit to the AC	District Conservationist	September 15
Completed “present fiscal year” QA Plans are submitted to the AC	District Conservationist	September 30
Consolidate and submit the findings of the QAR Team for present fiscal year	Area Conservationist	September 30
Completed present fiscal year QA Plans are forwarded to the ASTC-O	Area Conservationist	October 15
Draft final report of findings (FROF) for past fiscal year Second Level QAR’s and submit to Leadership Team	Assistant State Conservationist for Operations	October 30
Submit selection of two Field offices for State level QAR, requested QAR Team members, and proposed review dates	Area Conservationist	December 1
Leadership Team will prepare a list of actions to address items in the FROF and submitted to the ASTC-O	Leadership Team	December 1
Consolidate list of actions that the Leadership Team members have developed and prepare a report for Field Office staff	Assistant State Conservationist for Operations	January 1
Coordinate State level QAR dates with QAR Team members	Assistant State Conservationist for Operations	March 1
QAR Teams conduct State level QAR’s	QAR Team	March 15 – September 1

CO404-10(4)